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## SENATE UNANIMOUSLY PASSES RESOLUTION TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WEEK

WASHINGTON, DC – The Senate on Friday unanimously passed a bipartisan resolution introduced by **U.S. Senators Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), Ted Kaufman (D-DE) and Mike Crapo (R-ID)**, designating the week beginning October 10, 2010 as “National Wildlife Refuge Week.”

President Theodore Roosevelt established the first National Wildlife Refuge in 1903. Since then, the Refuge System has grown to encompass 150 million acres, 552 refuges and 38 wetland management districts. The first National Wildlife Refuge Week was held in 1995.

The resolution celebrates over a century of conservation and highlights the importance of the National Wildlife Refuge System to wildlife populations, as well as the enjoyment of hunters and anglers, birders, youth, and other recreationists.

“National Wildlife Refuges play a critical role in preserving this nation’s natural heritage for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. The five refuges in Maryland not only serve as home to some of our state’s most treasured and iconic landscapes and species, they form the foundation of a \$1.5 billion economy built around hunters, anglers and wildlife watchers. I am proud Congress has agreed to celebrate the contributions of National Wildlife Refuges during the week of October 10,” **said Senator Cardin**, Chairman of the Senate Water and Wildlife Subcommittee.

National Wildlife Refuges in Maryland include:

- Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge
- Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge
- Martin National Wildlife Refuge
- Patuxent Research Refuge
- Susquehanna River National Wildlife Refuge

“National wildlife refuges are critical to the goals of wildlife conservation to both keep common species common, and to protect and restore imperiled species,” **Senator Kaufman said**. “In my home state of Delaware, we are fortunate to have two national wildlife refuges: Bombay Hook and Prime Hook. The tens of thousands of acres of freshwater wetlands and tidal salt marshes these refuges protect are considered some of the best on the Atlantic Coast. And they are amazing places to visit and enjoy. I am proud to have sponsored this resolution to celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week and honor refuges in Delaware and across the country. They are truly American treasures and critical parts of our natural heritage.”

“Wildlife refuges are important to Idaho, as well as throughout our country,” **Senator Crapo said.** “Idaho is home to seven refuges, which provide needed habitat and environmental benefits. The refuges also provide economic and recreation benefits for local communities and the state. Refuges like Bear Lake, Deer Flat, Kootenai and Minidoka (to name a few) showcase some of the best places in Idaho. Resolutions like this one help raise awareness of the importance of wildlife conservation.”

Senate Resolution 644 also recognizes the economic benefits refuges bring to local economies as well as the critical role volunteer “Friends” groups play in the everyday operations of refuges.

Every year more than 39,000 volunteers and over 220 “Friends” organizations contribute nearly 1.4 million hours of their time to volunteer at refuges across the country. The recreational opportunities provided by refuges generate significant revenue for local businesses and communities. Each year, refuges draw 41 million visitors, generating \$1.7 billion and 27,000 jobs for local economies. Refuges are also a good investment for the American people. For every \$1 appropriated, refuges generate \$4 in economic activity.

The resolution was cosponsored by 20 other Senators including Senators Casey, Murray, Lincoln, Landrieu, Burris, Udall (CO), Bingaman, Kerry, Shaheen, Feinstein, Bennett (CO), Feingold, Cantwell, Corker, Reed, Udall (NM), Pryor, Stabenow, Whitehouse and Inouye.

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